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THE Tryal of Skill,

Performed in ESSEX,

At the *ELECTION* of *Colonel Mildmay* and *Sr Francis Masham*, upon the 11*th* of *March*, 1689.

In a Letter from Mr *G.* Minister of *C.* to a Minister in *LONDON.*

SIR!

THat [I] my self, with the generallity of our *Brotherhood* of this County, yeilded our cheerful and due Obedience to the *Circular Letter*; upon the occasion of the Election here; will not be doubted by you, who know, that We never wanted, either Invitation or Command, to incite us, to exert our selves, upon every occasion, wherein We have conceived our *Church* beset: And being now cautioned, of the imminent danger threatning us; *We* out-did our selves, in our labouring against *Sr Francis Masham* and *Colonel Mildmay*, notwithstanding that many of us, did encounter great checks and discouragements; particularly our Reverend Brother Mr *N.* was severely reprimanded by a very great Lady (*his Patroness*) for intermedling in her Province, and tampering with her Tenants, about *Saffron-Walden*, and *Audley-End*.

For my part, I ever was, as you well know, unwearied in the *Churches Cause*; and did now act with all my might in its present Quarrel; and cannot say that my labour was wholly in vain, tho, to my grief, I found not the success I desired; for when I perswaded and exhorted against *Colonel Mildmay* and *Sr Francis Masham*, some of my *Parish*, would very malapartly answer me, that 'twas not my *Office* to Slander *Gentlemen* of such great desert as they knew them to be; and that they were as true *Church of England Men* as my self, (not paying me the due Complement of excepting my Orders) When I endeavoured to dispose my People to cast their Votes upon *Sr Eliab Harvey*, and *Sr Anthony Abdy*, they told me that they had no Quarrel against *Sr Eliab*, but they knew he was now set up to thrust out the *Colonel*, whom they had oft trusted in this great concern, to their own satisfaction, nay, and to the credit of their *County*; that they knew him to be as forward as any *Gentleman* in *England*, to place the *Crown* upon our present *Soveraignes Head*, and that he would expose his all, to support his *Majesties Throne*: As to Sr *A. A.* they ript up old Storys, of his rigour and severity against *Protestant Dissenters*; and affirmed, that he had been so zealous against their *Meetings*, that he had gone in person to dispers̄e them, and *prick them with the point of his Sword to drive them out*; They also said, that they could not forget, that he had joyned in the *arbitrary imprisonment*, of many of their honest and innocent *Neighbours*, in the *Block-house or Fort at Tilbury*; tho' they were guilty of no other crime, then that of using their freedom in voteing for *Parliament Men*. And after such Criminations as these, they upbraided me with the promise of the *Chiefraines* of our *Church*, to come to a temper towards Dissenters, and urged, that if we did so intend, we ought to joyn with them, in prefering a Person of the known *candour and moderation* of Sr. *Francis Masham* before Sr *A. A.* To this (*I must confess, between our selves*) I knew not what to say; but you are sure, that, tho' I could not bring them over, I would keep to our side, and so [I] and most of our Clergy did, notwithstanding, to the wounding of our Souls, *we saw no more Votes for us out of many* Parishes *then those of the* Ministers.

Many of our *Gentlemen*, were found as active as *We* of the *Clergy*: Of them, none out-did Mr *W—th*, who bravely told some who opposed us, that they would be damn'd if they voted against Sr *A.* and Sr *E.* yet the wretches would run that hazard: And a well deserving Neighbour *Gentleman* to this place, being a *Commissioner* for the *Tax*, refused to ease a *Country-man* who was over-rated, unless he would Vote with us.

Our *honest Apparitors and Bailiffs*, were true to our Cause, and very useful; they perswaded and threatn'd a great many into our Interest, and not a few to stay at home; Indeed all *Orders* of Men amongst us, out-did the *Adversary*, in *Industry*, *Art* and *Expence*: *We* mounted those who had not Horses; whereas, the *Enemies* body, was near half *Infantry*: *We* had not a few *Deserters*, with us; whom We bought off: *Our Men*, wanted neither Meat, Drink, nor Money; and We upbraided the contrary party, by telling them, that they had brought Bread and Cheese in their *Pockets* for their *Dinners*, as *in truth* they must, had they not brought

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brought Money to provide better for themſelves, for they well knew that they were to live at no Bodies charge but their own.

Sr! you will not now doubt but that we made a very great Show; *We* brought into the *Field* an incredible Number of Horſe, not only of *Gentlemen*, but of *Black and Blew Coates*, and *Liveries* of all Colours; I had the honour to attend my Lord of L. who was on *t'other ſide of the Hedge*, to take a view of them; and *We* ſeemed confident of Victory; but now I come to the melancholy part of our Story.

About 12 of the clock they went to *Polling*, when the *High Sheriffe* appointed 6 *Books* to take the Names for the *Candidates* on each ſide; the Crowd and Preſs of *Freeholders* was great for ſome houres, that they might get themſelves polled and diſpatched; in which time an unlucky expreſſion fell from a *Clergy man*, to this purpoſe; pray let me in to be polled, for *I have no body at home to feed my Cattel*; *Our Adverſaryes* inſtantly catched hold of this, and by an *Innuendo*, make the Poor man to intend, and that malitiouſly (*becauſe his Neighbours were all on the other ſide*,) the *Sheep* of his *Flock* (who expected him to *preach* the next day, it being the *Faſt* appointed by his *Majeſty's Proclamation*) but the good Man had no ſuch thought in his head, no more then he had of obſerveing that day; but really meant, in the true ſenſe of the word, his *Cowes and Swine*: I muſt ſay by the way that we have great reaſon to be very careful of our Words, when they are thus dangerouſly wreſted.

Towards night the *Poll* flagg'd and abated on our ſide, and our cauſe was evidently loſt; the *adverſe Poll* continuing a conſiderable time after our ſtock was ſpent; at length, none offering themſelves to *Poll*, upon *Proclamations* made by the *Sheriffe*; the *Books* were brought in to be caſt up; when it appeared that we had trick'd them, in haveing a 7th *Apocryphal Book*, filled with names for our purpoſe; which Sr *Francis Maſham* and *Colonel Mildmay*, did for ſome time object againſt, but Mr *High Sheriffe*, agreeing to take it in; The *Inſpectors* of the *Poll* on both ſides, went to caſt up the *Books*, which was not finiſhed till about midnight, when it was agreed, that the Votes were thus.

Mildmay,	*Maſham*,	*Abdy*,	*Harvey*,
1978.	1956.	1833.	1827.

Hereupon, about one in the Morning, the *Elected Knights*, were carried in Triumph, to the Lodgings of the *Earl of Oxford*, the *Earl of Mancheſter*, and the *Lord Fitz. Water*; who had eſpouſed their Intereſt, and ſat up to receive and congratulate their Election.

Thus (Sr) were We brought *to the Day of Humiliation*, and ſome of the *Country-men* expected that my *Lord* of L. would have given them a *Sermon upon that occaſion*; but, *the Tryal of Skill being over*, his Lordſhip had left the Town in the Afternoon; however the *Lords* whom I but now named, came to *Church*, attended by the *New Knights* of our *Shire*, and many *Gentlemen* of the *Country*. *I am* (*dear Sir*) *your affectionate, but afflicted Brother and Servant.*

Poſtſcript.

Sir!

THo' I have been upon a very unpleaſing Subject, I have dealt impartially in it, and muſt confeſs to you, that We had very fair play in the deciſſion of this *Tryal of Skill*; indeed, *We* had much favour from the *High Sheriff*, for, beſides his allowing us the 7th *ſham Book*, he rejected about 150. *Quakers*, who were *Feee-holders and offered to Póll againſt us.*

I muſt alſo tell you, that We are reproached, that, tho the *Papiſts* did not appear, *their whole Intereſt was with us*; and (*ſeeing We have loſt the day*) I could wiſh, (*for our Credit*) it had been otherwiſe.

We had alſo, *all the Friends of the* Abdicated King *on our ſide*; & one of my Neighbours coming in now from *London*, when I was going to ſeal up this, informs me, that one Mr *R.* a *Mercer* (who lately removed from *Pater-Noſter-Row* to *Covent-Garden*) in his return from giving us his Vote (*and who I underſtand was alwayes right*) committed a great over-ſight at the *Crown* in *Brentwood*, the laſt night; and it troubles me that it is ſo publickly known; The Story is this, That Mr *R.* having in his company an *Iriſh Papiſt*, and his own two Sons (who are at *Brentwood School*) with ſeveral others, *drank the Healths of the late* King James, *and his* Queen, *and of the pretended* Prince of Wales; and commanded the *Lads* to do it upon their Knees; and that they ſhould do it, at their *Maſters* every day after Dinner; ſaying that if their *Maſter* found fault with it, he wonld ſend for them away. My *Neighbour* alſo tells me (and I can credit him) that in the ſame Evening, there were moſt Treaſonable Papers caſt about *Brentwood-Street*, called, *The Sad Eſtate of the Kingdom, &c.* And that it is the common Opinion there, that they came out of the Pocket of Mr *R.* or of his Iriſh Companion's. *Pudet hæc opprobria Nobis, et dici potuiſſe, et non potuiſſe refelli.*

Chelmesford, March 12. 1689.

FINIS.